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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SAO PAULO 001262

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SUBJECT: SAO PAULO REACHES OUT TO UNIVERSITIES

REF: (A) SAO PAULO 1038; (B) SAO PAULO 1105; (C) Sao Paulo 862

11. SUMMARY: As a part of a Mission-wide initiative to reach out to institutions that have historically had little contact with the USG, Sao Paulo Consulate General's Entry Level Officers are visiting universities and other organizations throughout its consular district. The officers found students to be receptive and curious about the full range of bilateral and multilateral issues and exchange programs. Post will continue this initiative and periodically report results. END SUMMARY.

#### SAO PAULO UNIVERSITY OUTREACH EVENTS

12. On October 5, Conoff Keith Gilges teamed up with two fellow vice consuls from the Canadian and German consulates to discuss the present and future of diplomacy at a local college. Gilges and associates addressed over 300 students and faculty in standing-room only accommodations at the Ipiranga University (Faculdades Associadas Ipiranga em Centro Universitrio Assungco). The team answered questions about diplomacy and its role given the advent of email, the internet and twenty-four hour news coverage.

13. On November 23, Conoff Ory Abramowicz addressed approximately 25 students from Armando Alvares Penteado Foundation (FAAP), a multi-disciplinary private university. Abramowicz spoke to business, economics, and government relations students on an array of topics that included U.S.-Brazilian environmental cooperation, the Kyoto Protocol, the recent U.S. mid-term elections and its impact on USG's Iraq policy, U.S. concerns regarding Venezuela, and anti-drug trafficking efforts.

14. On December 7, Conoffs Christopher Rose and Sheila Carey fielded questions from a small group of international relations students at Sao Marcos University, a small liberal arts school founded in 1970 and officially recognized as a university in 1994. Its student body numbers about 5,000 and includes many older students from lower and middle class families who work during the day and attend classes at night. The majority of the discussion centered on U.S.-Venezuela and Bolivia relations, U.S. elections, and immigration reform.

#### OUTREACH IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL - PORTO ALEGRE

15. Conoffs Tomika Konditi and Andrew Witherspoon visited the Campo do Tuca community and two top universities in Porto Alegre, capital of the southern Brazilian state Rio Grande do Sul, from October 16 through 18, to conduct consular outreach. With a population of almost 11 million, Rio Grande do Sul is the third largest state and pool of visa applicants in Sao Paulo's consular district. As is prevalent throughout the country, the visit revealed the wide gap between the rich and poor and provided insight into the profile of applicants from the state.

16. The Conoffs kicked off their trip with a visit to the Tuca daycare center located in one of the city's poorest sections, Campo

do Tuca. Tuca is a daycare center for children from low-income families that is subsidized by the government and supported by corporate donations. Approximately 100 children, aged one to fourteen, are guaranteed two meals and basic dental and nutritional care at the facility. The center also teaches sewing and culinary job skills to women in the community and offers counseling on government-sponsored programs such as "Bolsa Familia" (REF A).

¶7. The community surrounding the center is impoverished. Homes with no electricity, teenaged parents with limited education, and unemployment are common. President Lula's Workers Party (Partido de Trabalhadores - PT) (REFS B-C) has strong support in the area, as evidenced by the party's logo painted on many modest and makeshift homes. The pride of the community is the cooperative recycling operation that provides subsistence income to roughly twenty adults.

¶8. The community center personnel were eager to talk to consulate representatives and outline ways the consulate could get involved with the center, including encouraging large U.S. corporations like Dell to donate computers and learning material. The center would be an ideal organization for long-term and continued outreach efforts with an American Presence Post (APP) in Porto Alegre. As of now, the center's biggest donors are Brazilian banks, which provide foodstuffs.

¶9. In stark contrast to the Conoffs' visit to Campo do Tuca was the setting for their next outreach visit - the top private university in the state, Pontifical Catholic ia University (PUC), and the prestigious Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. The majority of students at these schools received a private secondary education that prepared them for rigorous college entrance examinations. A private high school education is usually affordable only to the

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upper-middle and upper classes of Brazil. Students at both universities were interested in discussing exchange and study opportunities and visa procedures.

¶10. COMMENT: Residents of Rio Grande do Sul frequently ask when the USG will open a new Consulate in Porto Alegre to replace the one closed in 1996. Many complain of the inconvenience of having to travel to Sao Paulo for visa interviews. There will likely be considerable interest in the proposed APP for the city when people find out about it, and vocal demand for it to include a visa component.

¶11. Future outreach activities will continue to broaden the range of universities and expand to include more institutions that historically have had little personal contact with the Consulate. We have found that lower and middle class students at newer and less-prestigious institutions are just as interested in the U.S. and its policies as those attending more established universities. END COMMENT.

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